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For over twenty-three years Mary Ellen has worked for and with nonprofits, government entities, and for-profit corporations in northern Illinois suburbs to develop affordable housing programs and projects. She first came to Illinois in September 1993 as the Executive Director of the Lake County Affordable Housing Commission & Corporation. She has also directed the activities of the Highland Park IL Community Land Trust and Housing Opportunity Development Corporation. In September 2008, she became the President of Lake County Residential Development Corporation. For 38 years this non-profit has developed and preserved over 1,362 units of rental and homeownership affordable housing in 43 locations in Lake and McHenry counties.

Mary Ellen has over thirty-four years of experience working for non-profit organizations, twenty-eight of which have been in the affordable housing field. She holds a BS in Architecture from the University of Texas and lives with her husband Tim Angell and dog Weezie in Evanston.